

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A tire tread mould comprising a lower molding part and an upper molding part defining respectively the outer surface and the inner surface of a tread, at least one of the parts being movable between two positions corresponding to the opening and closure of the mould, wherein the upper molding part has elements for hooking a longitudinal end of the tread, the hooking elements are formed by at least one hook, the hook having a free end oriented longitudinally towards the outside of the mould and an inclined surface opposite its free end to facilitate the retraction of said hook.

2. (Original) The mould of Claim 1, wherein the hooking elements protrude relative to a surface of the upper molding part.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) The mould of Claim [[3]] 1, wherein the hook extends transversely over at least part of the width of the upper molding part.

5. (Currently Amended) The mould of Claim [[3]] 1, wherein the [[protruding]] hooking elements comprise several hooks spaced in the transverse direction.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended) The mould of Claim [[3]] 1, wherein the hook has a pointed free end.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Original) The mould of Claim 1, wherein the lower molding part has at least one raised transverse edge which cooperates with the hooking elements of the upper molding part.

10. (Original) The mould of Claim 1, wherein the lower molding part has protruding elements to cooperate with the elements of the upper molding part.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The mould of Claim 10, wherein~~ A tire tread mould comprising a lower molding part and an upper molding part defining respectively the outer surface and the inner surface of a tread, at least one of the parts being movable between two positions corresponding to the opening and closure of the mould, wherein the upper molding part has elements for hooking a longitudinal end of the tread, the lower molding part has protruding elements to cooperate with the elements of the upper molding part, and the protruding elements of the lower molding part are formed at least by a hook having a free end oriented longitudinally towards the inside of the mould.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~The mould of Claim 10, wherein~~ A tire tread mould comprising a lower molding part and an upper molding part defining respectively the outer surface and the inner surface of a tread, at least one of the parts being movable between two positions corresponding to the opening and closure of the mould, wherein the upper molding part has elements for hooking a longitudinal end of the tread, the lower

molding part has protruding elements to cooperate with the elements of the upper molding part, and the protruding elements of the lower part of the mould comprise a molding surface for a leading edge on the tread to facilitate unhooking from the hooking elements of the upper molding part.

13. (Original) A molding and vulcanization apparatus for tire treads comprising a mould of Claim 1, which comprises progressive demolding means for the tread.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein A molding and vulcanization apparatus for tire treads comprising a tire tread mould and progressive demolding means for the tread, the tire tread mould comprising a lower molding part and an upper molding part defining respectively the outer surface and the inner surface of a tread, at least one of the parts being movable between two positions corresponding to the opening and closure of the mould, wherein the upper molding part has elements for hooking a longitudinal end of the tread, and the progressive demolding means are formed by the end of a plate which can be translated on the lower molding part in the longitudinal direction.

15. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the end of the plate comprises at least one roller extending in the transverse direction, mounted freely in rotation.

16. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the end of the plate is in the form of a shovel.

17. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the plate comprises rollers extending in the transverse direction of support of the tread, said rollers being free in rotation.

18. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the plate is mounted to be translatable relative to the lower molding part by means of rollers extending in the transverse direction which are mounted freely in rotation which cooperate with the longitudinal edges of said lower molding part.